



H.Res. 1227 – Condemning sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and calling on the international community to take immediate actions to respond to the violence

FLOOR SITUATION

H.Res. 1227 is being considered on the floor under suspension of the rules and will require a two-thirds majority vote for passage. This legislation was introduced by Representative Carolyn Maloney (D-NY) on May 22, 2008. The resolution was referred to the Committee on Foreign Affairs, but was never considered.

H.Res. 1227 is expected to be considered on the floor of the House on September 23, 2008.

SUMMARY

H.Res. 1227 resolves that the House of Representatives:

- Strongly condemns the use of all forms of sexual violence, including rape, in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Condemns the actions of all armed groups in the Democratic Republic of the Congo, including militias and rebel groups, such as the Forces Democratiques de Liberation du Rwanda (FDLR), Mai-Mai Militia, and the Front for Patriotic Resistance of Ituri, that have created a culture of impunity for rape and sexual violence;
- Calls on the Government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop a strategy to address and end the large-scale sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo by--
 - protecting its civilians from violence and to respect and enforce the rule of law in accordance with international norms and standards;
 - holding all armed groups accountable for their actions by implementing judicial reforms to investigate, arrest, and try suspected criminals;
 - prosecuting and punishing members of the Congolese Armed Forces who have committed crimes of sexual violence and other atrocities; and
 - establishing a verification mechanism to ensure that officers with a track record of criminal activity and rape do not receive important posts in the Congolese Armed Forces, the national police, and other security services;
- Urges an increased effort by the United States through the Department of State and other donor countries to provide greater assistance to the Democratic Republic of the Congo for police and military human rights education and training, and training for those in the judicial and law enforcement sector in order to improve their ability to investigate and prosecute rapists;
- Strongly urges the United States Agency for International Development to increase its assistance to victims of rape and sexual violence in the Democratic Republic of the Congo;
- Urges the Secretary of State to appoint a special envoy to the Democratic Republic of the Congo to sustain United States engagement in a peace process and stabilization programs, and to continue its leadership towards the implementation of the Nairobi communiqué;
- Encourages the Secretary of State to continue to work with the heads of the other agencies implementing programs in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to develop a plan for systematically assessing the United States Government's overall progress in achieving the policy objectives of the Democratic Republic of the Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006;
- Encourages the international community to ensure greater coordination in its response to sexual violence and to provide further humanitarian assistance, particularly social development assistance offering psychosocial support, medical assistance, civic education aimed at preventing



LEGISLATIVE DIGEST

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sexual violence, and reintegration support to survivors of sexual and gender-based violence in the eastern Democratic Republic of the Congo;

- Reaffirms its support for democracy, the rule of law, and human rights in the Democratic Republic of the Congo and calls upon regional African leaders to support the preservation of a democratic political system in the country;
- Encourages full protection of women and girls and the promotion of their rights by emphasizing the responsibilities of all countries to put an end to impunity and to prosecute those responsible for genocide crimes, including those related to sexual and other forms of violence against women and girls;
- Calls on the Secretary General of the United Nations and the permanent members of the Security Council to immediately take steps to--
 - ensure that the United Nations Mission in the Democratic Republic of the Congo (MONUC) is fully funded to and strategically deployed in areas where sexual violence is most prevalent;
 - include an adequate number of female troops and police in MONUC to properly manage incidents of rape and sexual violence; and
 - provide more in depth and continuing gender sensitive training to its peacekeepers; and
 - hold all military and civilian personnel associated with MONUC who have committed acts of rape or sexual exploitation accountable for their crimes and ensure that they are permanently barred from serving in any future peacekeeping operation;
- Encourages a transparent process for the government of the Democratic Republic of the Congo's review of mining contracts; and
- Strongly encourages United States companies investing and operating in the Democratic Republic of the Congo to exert oversight concerning where their products are coming from and who is benefitting from the trade of such products.

BACKGROUND

The ongoing conflict in the Democratic Republic of Congo (DRC), primarily fought over natural resources, has been one of the deadliest crisis since World War II, claiming millions of lives. Sexual violence is used as a method of warfare by all parties in the conflict. According to the United Nations, the situation in the DRC is the single worst crisis of violence against women in the world. Women who survive these brutal attacks are vulnerable to an increased risk of HIV, unwanted pregnancy, and psychological trauma. One hospital in Goma, the Heal Africa Hospital, reported treating 4,800 rape victims in 2005.

In July 2006, the Parliament in the Democratic Republic of Congo passed the Law on the Suppression of Sexual Violence, but little action has been taken by the authorities to enforce the statute. In 2006, the United States passed the Democratic Republic of Congo Relief, Security, and Democracy Promotion Act of 2006 (P.L. 109-456) which provided bilateral and multilateral assistance to the DRC.

STAFF CONTACT

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